Trump move not all doom and gloom; Leaders unite on climate pact, June 3

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Body

Leaders unite on climate pact, June 3

Perhaps we should explore some of the facts on efforts to deal with the challenge of climate change.

The International Energy Agency reports that CO2 emissions have been flat for the past three years, despite a growing population and greater use of energy. The one country that has led the reduction of CO2 emissions is none other than the U.S., followed by China. On the other hand, and despite spending billions on renewables, the German emissions are the same today as they were in 2009.

Germany has turned to coal displacing natural gas in power generation, while the U.S. has turned to gas displacing coal. And while most will credit the Barack Obama administration for this turnaround in the U.S., the biggest reason is that the abundance of natural gas has driven the price to a level where the cost to produce electricity with gas is lower than coal.

If we add the health and climate impacts, the advantage of gas grows significantly.

So before we all jump on the gloom and doom bandwagon, we may consider that, as regrettable as this decision may appear, it may lead to the real serious discussions that may lead to binding, nationally determined contributions - something the Paris agreement fails to do.

Mel Ydreos, Toronto

Context is missing from the Star's coverage of the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris climate accord. The accord never had the support of the American public or the U.S. Congress. Barack Obama signed the accord but knew he could not get it through Congress to give it the legitimacy of a binding treaty.

The physical impact of a U.S. withdrawal is minimal. As Danish professor Bjorn Lomborg tells us, U.S. climate policies under the Paris accord would only reduce global temperatures by 0.031 C by 2100. And even if every nation fulfils every promise by 2030, and continues to fulfil them until the end of the century, the entirety of the Paris promises would reduce temperature rises by just 0.17 C.

So this combined effort of all Paris signatories, at a cost of trillions, would reduce global warming by the amount you would get by driving 21 kilometres south or climbing two flights of stairs.

Pav Penna, Georgetown

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